

Testimony of Dana Forry
In Opposition of H.B. 6889, Juvenile Matters
March 15, 2023

My name is Dana Forry and I am the former Bridgeport Juvenile Review Board (JRB) Program Director (2012-2022).

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 6889, specifically section 5, which rolls back the removal of Family with Service Needs from court. The reason that there may be visible struggles with youth who have been referred to community based programs instead of court is that most have not been provided the support that is necessary for their success- funding and service/intervention access.

Instead of reverting back to sending low risk youth to court, which we agreed was harmful to youth and not the most cost effective way to handle things, we should instead focus on where the cracks appear to be in the community based diversion system and address them.

I am confident that with proper support, staffing and access to resources that the community based diversion system will offer youth the opportunity to get back on the right track on a larger scale than it has been able to do thus far.

Furthermore, HB 6889 has many other harmful components, many of which assume that the youth's family is the problem and fail to offer resources and support for them and their children. I strongly oppose this bill as it will both undo progress that has been made and have harmful impacts on our communities.

Thank you for your time,

Dana Forry

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